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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## USAID Continues to Help Afghan Farmers and Agribusiness

**KABUL, AFGHANISTAN, OCT. 31** – The Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Assadullah Zamir and the Mission Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Herbie Smith, agreed today to continue collaboration supporting activities that will help improve food economic security for rural Afghans.

Under USAID's Regional Agricultural Development Projects (RADPs), the two agencies have agreed on objectives for the coming year to help small farmers and agribusinesses increase their productivity and income. Together the two agencies are closely collaborating on work plans for the \$300 million RADP program that will enable farmers and agribusinesses to increase their productivity and incomes. The project supports access to improved seeds, improved household nutrition, market access, access to credit for small farmers, and income generation activities for women to improve food security and income.

The agricultural sector is the backbone of the Afghan economy, and is beginning to emerge from years of underperformance. The Ministry's guidance is already evident in moving Afghanistan from stabilization to long-term development, and the Ministry is now focusing on making sure necessary knowledge and skills are transferred to MAIL staff.

"My ministry is committed to restoring and strengthening Afghanistan's licit agricultural economy, and through close collaboration with USAID is moving forward to achieve this strategic objective," said Minister Zamir.

RADP is a five-year program focused on wheat, high-value crops such as grapes and almonds, and livestock. The program aims to strengthen the ability of producers, associations, traders, and agribusinesses to respond to market demand and help create market links between farmers and small, medium and large businesses that allow the private sector to improve and grow. Addressing policy, legal and regulatory constraints is fundamental to this partnership and critical to its success.

"This program strengthens farmers' knowledge and skills on improved wheat, high value crop, and livestock production techniques," said USAID Mission Director Herbie Smith. "These activities enable farmers to better market their products and generate more income for their families."

The RADP program will be implemented throughout Afghanistan, covering 21 provinces.

*The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years."*



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